Diets Don't Really Work

By Utah Department of Health
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Are diets really worth all the sacrifice and work? Will you lose weight and – most important – keep it off? UCLA researchers say the chances are pretty good you're going to gain the weight back if you lost weight by dieting only. Traci Mann, associate professor of psychology and lead author of the study, and her co-authors conducted a rigorous analysis of 31 long-term dieting studies.

"You can initially lose 5-10% of your weight on any number of diets, but then the weight comes back," said Mann. "We found that the majority of people regained all the weight, plus more. Sustained weight loss was found only in a small minority of participants, while complete weight gain was found in the majority. Diets do not lead to sustained weight loss or health benefits for the majority of people."

The researchers wondered whether it would have been better for the people never to have gone on the diets at all. Researchers say that in some of the studies they looked at that a good predictor for someone who would gain weight in the future was whether or not he or she had participated in formal weight loss programs previously.

One study followed obese patients who had dieted for various lengths of time. Of those who were followed for fewer than two years, 23% gained back more weight than they originally lost. Of those who were followed for more than two years, 83% gained more weight than they had lost.

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Another study found that 50% of dieters weighed more than 11 pounds over their starting weight fiver years after they participated in the diet. Moral of the story – A healthy diet is centered on fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. If you're looking to lose weight and keep it off, try adopting the mentality of making a healthy lifestyle change and not just "going on a diet." A healthy diet is for life!